

Patriot Express Loan Helps Albany Entrepreneur Reach New Level of Success

Col. Robert Domenici started Strategic Response Initiatives (SRI) as a niche business that specializes in the training, supply and maintenance of all phases of emergency preparedness, from WMD to HAZMAT. In 2007, Domenici financed SRI's big jump into the federal procurement ring through the SBA loan program for veterans, Patriot Express.

With the \$250,000 SBA backed loan from M&T Bank, the Watervliet-based company was able to finance the training and equipment for a \$675,000 contract to train the first-ever Iraqi HAZMAT Response Force. The five week training has been very effective, as the Iraqi HAZMAT Team remains in action today. The successful completion of the contract allowed SRI to completely pay off their SBA loan from M&T Bank.

"Without M&T Bank's partnership, we might have been out of business. You need to be able to finance a contract up front," explained Domenici on why SRI used the SBA loan program. "We'll use it again to finance the build out of our company. I advocate the Patriot Express program to every vet I meet. It's great to get veterans off the ground."

Government contracting is big business for SRI, accounting for over 85% of the company's revenues. Past and current clients include: Dept. of Homeland Security Customs and Border Patrol, Dept. of State, EPA, US Marine Corps, US Central Command (Iraq), US National Guard, US Army, US Air Force, and over 15 local and state agencies. The Dept. of Homeland Security hired SRI in 2007 to conduct accident reconstruction training in Texas in a contract worth \$260,000. Corporate giant AIG hired SRI to build, train and equip an emergency response team in January 2008.

SRI has recently landed a sole-source contract with the French based company, Paul Boye Technologies, to be the exclusive distributor in the United States and Canada for the Tom suit, a chemical and biological personal protection suit. The Tom suit has a top, bottom, gloves, and booties that can be produced in different patterns, styles and colors to meet customers' needs and still meet chemical/biological standards.

SRI will use the SBA Patriot Express loan program again this year with M&T Bank to finance the staff build out to market and distribute the suits as well as fund current contracts won. With four full time employees and 15 contractors worldwide, Domenici would like to grow SRI to eight full time employees by 2009. Domenici also plans to eventually transition from importing the chemical/biological suit from France to manufacturing the suit in the US, creating 40-50 new jobs.

"Lt. Colonel Domenici used his military experience to develop his own small business and SBA's Patriot Express loan program will enable him to take his company to the next level. It's just the kind of result we were hoping for when we introduced the program a year ago. By utilizing this program SRI will be able to add jobs and fight the negative manufacturing trends that plague Upstate New York. SBA continues to reaffirm its commitment to serve those who have served our nation through the Patriot Express loan program," said Bernard J. Paprocki, SBA Syracuse District director.